

JACKSON (Mich.)
CITIZEN PATRIOT

Circ.: e: 36,349
S 37,489

Front Edit Other
Page Page Page

Date: MAY 8 1961

'Spoke As a Child . . .'

Years ago, a children's magazine came into the house that carried as a regular feature a little cartoon labeled "this is a Watchbird watching you."

The hero — or villain, depending on your temperament — was an odd-looking little figure that was continually peeking around corners checking on children to see if they picked up their pajamas, ate their oatmeal, did their chores.

* * *

The prospect was pretty terrifying, but it didn't take long to find out that, whether or not the Watchbird actually existed, he never did anything.

We let our pajamas lie; he ignored us. We fled the house without completing the oatmeal; the figure appeared the same the next edition of the magazine. We sneaked out of the chore detail and the Watchbird apparently turned his attention to other children.

Of course this isn't a child's story. We learned a lesson from this, and we recall it today. The lesson is that watchbirds are fine symbols, but people quickly learn whether or not they do anything.

President Kennedy has named a new "watchdog" (it seems unimportant that the "bird" has become a "dog") to keep tabs on the Central Intelligence Agency. The appointment comes in a wake of confusion and suspicion that CIA isn't doing what it should.

Mr. James Killian will watch things. Fine!

* * *

But skulking and spanking are two very different things, as children learn quickly, and as long as Mr. Killian does not spank or recommend any such thing to the President, his appointment is faintly absurd.

Let us hope that the watchdog reports, at least to the President, on what he sees and the President understands what to do about it.